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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/802,042	03/17/2004	Gerard Hillion	PET-2132	3470

23599 7590 10/16/2006

MILLEN, WHITE, ZELANO & BRANIGAN, P.C.
2200 CLARENDON BLVD.
SUITE 1400
ARLINGTON, VA 22201

EXAMINER

PRICE, ELVIS O

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1621

DATE MAILED: 10/16/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/802,042

Applicant(s)

HILLION ET AL.

Examiner

Elvis O. Price

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 September 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 2-14 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 2-14 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 3/17/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 2-14 are pending in the application

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Keim (US Pat. 2,383,601).

Keim disclose the presently claimed process for the alcoholysis of a vegetable or animal oil having natural free acidity, (1) comprising catalytically reacting said oil with a lower alcohol, (2) removing excess alcohol, followed by (3) a second transesterification reaction with additional alcohol and separating glycerol and excess alcohol (see Col. 2 of page 1 and Examples).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

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1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

Claims 2-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brunner et al. (WO 02/46339; see US Pat. Equivalent 6,960,673 B2).

Brunner et al. teach a process for the alcoholysis of a vegetable or animal oil having natural free acidity, (1) comprising catalytically reacting said oil with a lower alcohol, (2) removing excess alcohol, followed by (3) a second transesterification reaction with additional alcohol and separating glycerol and excess alcohol (see Cols. 3-5 and Example). The difference between the presently claimed invention and what is taught by the Brunner et al. reference is that Brunner et al. do not teach carrying out the catalytic transesterification in the presence of a heterogeneous fixed bed catalyst and using a zinc aluminate mixed oxide catalyst.

However, Gutsche et al. teach that esterification and/or transesterification reactions can be performed using heterogeneous fixed bed catalyst system and suitable catalysts are any solid catalyst including basic, acidic, organic, inorganic, cation/anion exchangers, acidic aluminas and zeolites (see Cols. 1, 3 and 4).

It would have been *prima facie* obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art, in view of the teachings in the Brunner et al. and Gutsche et al. references, to transesterify fatty oils as presently claimed because Brunner et al. teach a similar process for the alcoholysis/transesterification of a vegetable or animal oil having natural free acidity and

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Gutsche et al. teach that a heterogenous fixed bed catalyst, employing any suitable solid catalyst, can be used in esterification and/or transesterification reactions.

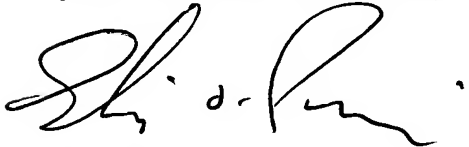
One having ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to implement a heterogenous fixed bed catalyst (inclusive of zinc aluminate oxide catalyst), as taught by Gutsche et al., into the Brunner et al. fatty oil esterification process because a heterogenous fixed bed catalyst is recognized in the art (as taught by Gutsche et al.; Col. 1, lines 59-64) as being relatively convenient for usage when considering that there is no need to filter off a solid catalyst or to wash out a homogeneous catalyst from the product mixture. The instantly claimed invention would have been therefore obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elvis O. Price whose telephone number is 571 272-0644. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30am to 5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Thurman K. Page can be reached on 571 272-0602. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elvis O. Price', with a stylized, cursive script.

Elvis O. Price